LIS 525

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Leadership Introductory Essay

The roles and responsibilities of the school library media specialist as a leader are many and varied. The SLMS takes an active role in improving the school community through serving on decision making teams, sharing expertise through instruction and presentation of information, encouraging and supporting the use of instructional technology, and advocating for the school library program. As a leader, the SLMS must remain current in practices and developments in the field of school librarianship.

The first artifact I selected for the Leadership portion of my portfolio is a professional brief written to a middle school administrator. The brief addresses a hypothetical staffing problem a middle school library media specialist faces and the proposed solution to the problem. This professional brief was part of a leadership/change agent project for LIS 585 Management of School Library Media Centers. I chose this artifact for inclusion because the hypothetical problem the SLMS in the brief faces is a reality for many librarians today. The problem is that of effectively running a library media program as a solo librarian. Finding the solutions to managing an understaffed media center and remaining a leader in the school community is the key to ensuring that both the media specialist and the media program remain essential to the school. While some of the solutions I uncovered during my research of this topic were common sense (don’t worry about answering the telephone during instruction), others were truly inspiring (student library staff initiatives). The research process required that I investigate professional and scholarly journals in creating this brief. This was particularly informative as the scholar’s proposed solution could sometimes be evaluated in the professional’s implementation of that solution. I discovered several ideas that I would implement in my own LMC even if I didn’t face a staffing shortage as these strategies would allow me to strengthen my leadership role in the school community.

The second artifact I selected is a collaborative lesson plan developed during my practicum at Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart. I worked with the library media specialist and the grade nine science teacher to create a research project that required the students to work collaboratively in a digital environment. I selected this artifact to demonstrate my leadership qualities and abilities because the project was dependent upon the instruction I provided for the SLMS and the science teacher on the creation and maintenance of a classroom wiki. I provided both with their own personal instruction period during which I taught them how to set up and manage a digital environment for student collaboration. I continued to provide support throughout the project and when I left Sacred Heart, both were comfortable with the tool and expressed great interest in creating future wiki projects. Leading the school in the discovery and implementation of new and useful technologies that support the curriculum and integrate information literacy skills is one of the leadership roles of the media specialist.